

Culture: The Life of Our City - Policy Consultation

**Thursday, 27 February 2025
Board Meeting**

Author:

Jennifer Kalionis, Associate
Director City Culture

Public

Purpose

Council has committed to developing a Cultural Policy as a key action in the Strategic Plan 2024–2028. In October 2024, Council approved a Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – *Culture: The Life of Our City* (the Discussion Paper), for public consultation.

This report seeks Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority's (Kadaltilla) feedback on the Discussion Paper as an important part of the consultation that informs the Cultural Policy's development. In particular, feedback is sought on the six draft priorities that have been identified in the Discussion Paper:

1. *People are at the Centre of our City and its Culture*
2. *Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Continuous Cultures*
3. *Celebrating Multiculturalism and Respecting Diversity and Traditions*
4. *Adelaide is Australia's Cultural and Creative Capital*
5. *The City's Culture is Connected to our Built and Natural Heritage, and*
6. *Creativity and Culture Drive our City's Future.*

In addition to general feedback on the Discussion Paper and its six draft priorities, and as outlined in paragraph 10 of this report, Administration seeks Kadaltilla's feedback on the following:

- How can we champion Kaurna culture in our shared future in meaningful ways?
- What steps can we take to ensure that Kaurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices influence, and are represented in the city's cultural decisions?
- What collaborative and co-led initiatives and projects would increase the visibility of Kaurna culture in the public realm?

Consultation feedback from the Cultural Forum held in December 2024 and from Panpanpalya in February 2025 highlighted the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation to be reflected in the development of the draft Cultural Policy. For example, through community partnerships and visible markers of Kaurna history and culture throughout the city and Park Lands. Key themes reflected in the feedback from Panpanpalya are included in this report at paragraph 25.1.

It is proposed that the Cultural Policy will operate over a ten-year period and will be supported by strategies and action plans developed in alignment with the City of Adelaide's Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plan and Budget process.

Feedback from Kadaltilla on this report and the Discussion Paper will be considered in the development of the draft Cultural Policy, which will be presented to Council for approval in 2025.

Recommendation

That the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority:

1. Receives the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – *Culture: The Life of Our City* for consultation and feedback as contained in Attachment A to Item 6.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Board of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on Thursday 27 February 2025.
 2. Authorises administration to draft feedback on the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – Culture: The Life of Our City, incorporating input from Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority Board Members, for circulation and approval by the Board outside of session.
 3. Notes that a consultation summary and draft Cultural Policy will be presented to Council for consideration and endorsement, with a further opportunity for community feedback prior to adoption by Council.
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Implications

Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-2025	Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-2025 The development of a Cultural Policy aligns with the <i>Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy</i> by supporting themes of cultural heritage, inclusivity, and public engagement. It reinforces the Strategy's objective of Memorable and Distinctive Places through cultural storytelling, public art, and Kaurna recognition. The Cultural Policy will support Park Lands planning and activation efforts by embedding responsibility for cultural outcomes across the organisation.
2023-2028 Strategic Plan	Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Strategic Plan Alignment – Cultural Value The draft priorities in the Discussion Paper aligns with the Cultural Value pillar, promoting Kaurna culture, heritage, and identity through cultural mapping, partnerships, and advocacy. Both documents prioritise Kaurna recognition, truth-telling, inclusivity, and sustainability, reinforcing Adelaide's commitment to embedding First Nations culture in its long-term vision.
City of Adelaide Strategies	The development of the Cultural Policy aligns with numerous Council Strategies by embedding cultural sustainability, reconciliation, and creative industries into city planning. It supports the City Plan – Adelaide 2036 by enhancing cultural precincts, fostering inclusion, and preserving heritage. Additionally, it complements the Heritage Strategy, Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan and Housing Strategy by ensuring cultural identity, accessibility, and diverse community engagement in city growth and development.
Policy	Council does not currently have a Cultural Policy. It is proposed that Council's Cultural Policy will operate from 2025 to 2036 to help set strategic directions for the City of Adelaide and its subsidiaries and focus its resources.
Consultation	Internal consultation took place in August 2024, followed by Council's endorsement of the <i>Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – Culture: The Life of Our City</i> in October 2024 for broader consultation. A Live Music Forum in November 2024 and a Cultural Forum in December 2024 engaged key community, cultural, government and industry leaders. Public consultation, which included an <i>Our Adelaide</i> online survey, concluded on 31 January 2025. A consolidated consultation summary and draft Cultural Policy will be presented to the City Community Services and Culture Committee and Council, then shared for further public consultation before adoption.
Resource	Development and consultation associated with the draft Cultural Policy is through existing resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The development of the Cultural Policy and any initiatives resulting of the Policy or subsequent strategies will reflect and comply with the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> , <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)</i> , and heritage regulations to protect Kaurna heritage and cultural sites. The Policy will also consider cultural misrepresentation, governance challenges, and legal compliance. Community consultation that underpins the development of the Policy ensures inclusivity, while alignment with national heritage guidelines safeguards cultural integrity in all initiatives under the policy.
Design	The development of a Cultural Policy and the draft priorities in the Discussion Paper aligns with: Good Design (ODASA) – Park Lands only Good Design Principles by ensuring context, inclusivity, and sustainability, protecting and activating culturally significant spaces while fostering community identity and creative expression. National Heritage Management Plan (NHMP) NHMP Design Guidance Matrix by embedding Kaurna recognition, heritage conservation, and cultural activation in the Adelaide Park Lands. It supports truth-telling, cultural mapping, public art, and events, enhancing storytelling and interpretation. By fostering cultural tourism, creative industries, and sustainability, it reinforces the Park Lands as a cultural, environmental, and economic asset, ensuring respectful recognition of Aboriginal heritage and vibrant community engagement.

Opportunities	The development of a Cultural Policy will define the role, goals and priorities of Council and its subsidiaries with respect to celebrating and supporting the richness and diversity of its community and its assets and reinforcing the City's status as the heart of the state's civic, cultural and commercial life.
City of Adelaide Budget Allocation	\$15,000 is allocated from the Arts and Cultural budget for documentation design and marketing materials associated with the development of Council's Cultural Policy.
Capital Infrastructure Projects	Not as a result of this report.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The draft City of Adelaide Cultural Policy has a project life from 2025 to 2036.
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report.
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report.

Discussion

1. As a key action in its Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Council has committed to, 'Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City's unique cultural identity and opportunities.' Responsibility for the implementation of the Cultural Policy will extend to all areas of Council.
2. The Cultural Policy will reflect Council's leadership role and responsibilities as the governing body for the Capital City of South Australia, its commitments to sustainable development as part of Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Music, and its responsibilities to its ratepayers and residents.
3. The Cultural Policy will aim to enable all people to participate in and contribute to the cultural life of our city, celebrate and honour our diverse and multicultural communities, and invest in Adelaide's distinctive heritage and creative sector.
4. Council does not have a current Cultural Policy. In this absence, delivery of cultural activity in the city remains aligned to Council's previous cultural strategy, '*Cultural Strategy A city designed for creativity 2017–2023*', which had a strong focus on arts and festivals.
5. To inform the development of the Cultural Policy, Council has endorsed public consultation on the Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City (Attachment A)*. A summary of this feedback will be presented to Council with the draft policy in April 2025.

Current State

6. The City of Adelaide champions the Adelaide Park Lands as a cultural and heritage asset, ensuring their preservation, activation, and accessibility for diverse communities. These initiatives ensure the Adelaide Park Lands remain a vibrant cultural and heritage destination, balancing preservation, creativity, and community connection, while reinforcing Adelaide's identity as a creative and cultural capital.
 - 6.1. Preserving and enhancing the heritage character of the Park Lands through adaptive reuse, upgrades, and conservation including the reviewing heritage overlays to ensure recognition and protection of culturally significant sites by 2025.
 - 6.2. Strengthening Kaurna cultural connections through cultural mapping, naming initiatives, and public art such as the Place of Reflection.
 - 6.3. Expanding the Art in Adelaide Public Art Database along with walks and trails to showcase the \$40 million Public Art Collection across the City and in the Park Lands including supporting public art installations, artist residencies, and storytelling projects that highlight the Park Lands' cultural significance such as the Hutt Road Entry Statement artworks.
 - 6.4. Enhancing visitor interpretation and signage to share First Nations and local heritage stories including the conducting of a Cultural Burn, guided by the Kaurna community, to support cultural and environmental sustainability.
 - 6.5. Hosting 717 annual events in the Park Lands, including Adelaide Fringe, WOMADelaide, and History Festival inviting thousands of visitors from across the globe and locally to enjoy the unique and beautiful parklands setting.
 - 6.6. Upgrading event infrastructure as part of city square and Park Lands improvements including developing multi-use green spaces, such as community gardens and pocket parks, for cultural and recreational engagement.

Definition of Culture

7. The proposed broad definition of 'culture' for the purpose of developing Council's Cultural Policy includes:
 - 7.1. Adelaide's cultural, creative, arts, and heritage industries
 - 7.2. The heritage, knowledge and cultural practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - 7.3. The expressions of identity, shared experience and aspirations of our diverse and multicultural communities that have shaped our society
 - 7.4. Historic and current cultural practices and events that reflect contemporary Adelaide and its broad and diverse communities.

Discussion Paper and Priorities

8. The Discussion Paper, *Culture – The Life Of Our City* sets out six priorities for a future Cultural Policy that aim to support a culturally vibrant, socially inclusive and equitable city. These priorities will be refined as a result of the consultation process and subsequently presented to Council for consideration and adoption:
 - 8.1. *People are at the Centre of our City and its Culture*

Nurture the ability for the community to connect with culture and express their creativity. Improve our city's appeal, liveability and global profile, through accessible and high-quality cultural experiences, including public art, events and festivals that reflect Adelaide's unique heritage and stories.
 - 8.2. *Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Continuous Culture*

Honour and strengthen awareness of Kaurna culture and connection to Country as central to Adelaide's identity and future.
 - 8.3. *Celebrating Multiculturalism and Respecting Diversity and Traditions*

Observe, fund and facilitate Adelaide's cultural and civic traditions including festive events and other social practices. Provide inclusive and respectful opportunities for people of all cultures, backgrounds, ages and abilities to participate in the cultural life of the city.
 - 8.4. *Adelaide is Australia's Cultural and Creative Capital*

Provide a city-wide approach to embed music, culture and heritage preservation in policy, place and community. Amplify Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Music and our leadership as Australia's creative and cultural capital.
 - 8.5. *The City's Culture is Connected to our Built and Natural Heritage*

Respect, protect and strengthen our world class architecture, cultural assets, collections, and environment. Ensure our cultural identity is easily accessible by the community through engaging and discoverable interpretation and digital resources.
 - 8.6. *Creativity and Culture Drives our City's Future*

Advance the role of culture in enriching the life of the city, our people and the environment. Raise our profile as a creative and cultural capital for the development of the city into the future and the wellbeing of local communities.

Alignment with the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy

9. A key priority of the Discussion Paper is *The City's Culture is Connected to our Built and Natural Heritage*. To better inform the policy's development and refine this priority, feedback is sought from the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority on the following questions:
 - 9.1. How can we best protect and showcase our city's-built architecture, cultural assets, and natural environment?
 - 9.2. What can we do to ensure that the City of Adelaide's cultural identity is more accessible and engaging for our community?
10. How can we improve our public spaces to better support cultural activities and community connections?
 - 10.1. The *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy (2015-2025)*, the *Kadaltilla Strategic Plan (2023-2028)*, the *Charter for the Adelaide Park Lands Authority*, the draft *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy: Towards 2036* and the priorities for a Cultural Policy outlined in the Discussion Paper all share a commitment to safeguard and celebrate the natural, cultural and recreational values of the Adelaide Park Lands, and reinforce Adelaide's identity as a vibrant and inclusive cultural capital.
 - 10.2. The priorities and directions as outlined in the Discussion Paper, *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy*, and *Kadaltilla Strategic Plan* collectively embed Kaurna culture and heritage into city planning through truth-telling, reconciliation, cultural mapping, Kaurna naming, and public storytelling, ensuring cultural sustainability remains central to Adelaide's development.
 - 10.3. The *Adelaide Park Lands Authority Charter* integrates heritage protection, Aboriginal cultural recognition, and public storytelling into its functions by advising on cultural mapping, public art, interpretation, and events. These functions align with the priorities for a Cultural Policy by supporting Kaurna identity, cultural sustainability, and the activation of the Park Lands as a key heritage and creative space.
 - 10.4. The opportunities and priorities for the Cultural Policy, *Adelaide Park Lands Strategy*, and the *Park Lands Authority Charter* align in prioritising public art, cultural interpretation, and activation of public spaces,

expanding cultural signage, art installations, and digital heritage storytelling to create dynamic cultural precincts and artist-led activations.

- 10.5. The priorities as outlined in the Discussion Paper, *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-25*, and Kadaltilla Strategic Plan support cultural events, festivals, and multi-use green spaces, fostering community connection, shared use, and engagement, reflecting in the 717 events hosted annually in the Park Lands.
- 10.6. The priorities as outlined in the Discussion Paper and *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-25* align in promoting cultural tourism, creative industries, and live performances, with investments in heritage conservation, public art, and cultural activation positioning Adelaide as a vibrant cultural and tourism destination.
- 10.7. The draft *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy: Towards 2036* and the Discussion Paper share a commitment to First Nations recognition, cultural activation, creative precincts, sustainability, and community inclusion. While the Park Lands Strategy focuses on preserving and activating public spaces, the draft Cultural Policy would strengthen this by embedding heritage, creative industries, and reconciliation, ensuring culture remains a vital part of the life of the city and its Park Lands.

Benchmarking

11. The Discussion Paper and priorities within it have been benchmarked against the cultural policies of other capital cities in Australia, all which have their own respective policies, strategies and action plans relating to culture and creativity.
12. International cultural policy follows UNESCO's best practice principles, promoting cultural diversity, creativity, and sustainable urban development. As a UNESCO Creative City of Music, Adelaide is part of the [Creative Cities Network](#), fostering global cooperation and cultural vibrancy. International cultural policy is informed and guided by the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), [MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration](#), and [UNESCO's Indigenous Engagement Policy](#).
13. The [Australian Cultural Policy Revive](#) prioritises First Nations storytelling, cultural diversity, artist support, and audience engagement. National cultural policy is informed and guided by [Creative Australia's First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocols](#) and industry insights.
14. The State Government's Cultural Policy is currently in development and Administration has been engaged with counterparts in State Government on their process.
15. Alignment with the State Government's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy for South Australia](#) has been undertaken.
16. The Australian Local Government Association has held an endorsed [Arts and Culture Policy Position](#) since 2020 which outlines that the creative sector is essential to the liveability and economic sustainability of all communities.

Consultation To Date

17. In November 2024, the *Live Music Forum* brought together 100 musicians, industry professionals, and cultural leaders to discuss challenges, strengths, and strategies for fostering a diverse and thriving UNESCO Creative City of Music.
18. In December 2024, *Culture: The Life of the City Forum* brought together 100 city shapers, community and business leaders, educators, creative practitioners, producers, policy developers, planners, and cultural advocates to explore the CoA's cultural identity, opportunities, and future vision.
19. Administration sought feedback on the Discussion Paper from Panpanpalya in February 2025. The feedback highlights the need for stronger Aboriginal representation, respect for self-determination and cultural practice, and meaningful partnerships in shaping Adelaide's cultural identity. Key themes reflected in the feedback from Panpanpalya included:
 - 19.1. *Aboriginal Representation and Visibility* – Increase Kaurna presence in policies, public spaces, images, and cultural videos.
 - 19.2. *Inclusivity and Multicultural Engagement* – Ensure policies reflect all communities, strengthening cultural connections and partnerships.
 - 19.3. *Truth-Telling and Storytelling* – Commit to truth-telling through signage, exhibitions, media, and digital storytelling.
 - 19.4. *Cultural Preservation* – Support Kaurna language, traditions, songlines, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.
 - 19.5. *Council's Role and Partnerships* – Align with the Stretch-RAP 2024-27 to ensure that the Cultural Policy strengthen ties with Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, and promotes self-determination.

- 19.6. *Kaurna Heritage and Mapping* – Develop cultural trails, heritage recognition, and Kaurna naming across the city.
- 19.7. *Artistic and Cultural Recognition* – Amplify Aboriginal artists, poets, and musicians through policy and initiatives.
- 19.8. *Action and Implementation* – Move beyond surface engagement, ensure meaningful inclusion, and embed truth-telling in civic processes.
- 20. Public consultation engagement activities to date have included pop-up community sessions at City of Adelaide venues including Adelaide Town Hall, Adelaide Central Market, Art Pod, Libraries and Community Centres, industry networking and youth advisory events to engage key demographics and ensure that diverse perspectives are reflected in the feedback. This has been complemented by a social media and online campaign to support the Cultural Policy's Our Adelaide survey which was open for submissions between December 2024 to the end of January 2025.

Next Steps

- 21. A consolidated consultation summary and a draft Cultural Policy will be presented to the City Community Services and Culture Committee and then to Council in April 2025, for the purposes of final public consultation and subsequent adoption by Council in Quarter 4 of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 22. Once adopted, the Cultural Policy will provide a framework to drive Council's strategic objectives and ensure that responsibility for culture is embedded across operational decision making.

Attachments

Attachment A – Cultural Policy Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City*

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